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State Department review completed

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ETHIOPIA: Civil disturbances stemming from long-standing economic and social grievances have erupted in several parts of the country.

Students, the main participants in the demonstrations that began on February 19, have engaged in rock-throwing melees in several cities. The students are expressing sympathy with teachers who began a nationwide strike on February 18 to protest government educational policies and pay scales. The students are also venting their long-standing frustrations over government policies, especially the regime's refusal to permit the formation of a student union. All junior high and secondary schools are reported closed, and some university students are boycotting classes. The US Embassy reports sporadic gunfire has been heard and has reliable information that four students were killed last week and five were killed Wednesday. The students have selected diplomatic cars as targets, including some US vehicles. Demonstrations in one town had distinctly anti-US overtones.

Public transportation has ceased operating in Addis Ababa because of attacks on buses. Taxi drivers struck on February 19 to protest the government's inability to deal effectively with the rising cost of living that has fueled general labor unrest for several weeks.

The Council of Ministers at a meeting yesterday issued orders to the security forces to crack down on all demonstrators. The ministers refused to compromise with the teachers or to reduce gasoline prices, as had been demanded by taxi and truck drivers.

A strong show of force will probably result in an escalation of demonstrations and violence. Senior officials and much of the urban public are already doubtful that the government of Prime Minister Aklilu can cope with the country's problems.

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The government's procrastination in carrying out reforms has contributed to the public's frustration. Emperor Haile Selassie may be forced to try to calm the situation by appointing a new government more committed to reform. The 81-year-old Emperor normally does not make important decisions quickly, but the seriousness of the situation may spur him to make an early move.

Military units have been deployed to protect fuel supplies, the airport, and other key installations. Police reaction to the demonstrations is mixed. At times they have responded slowly and inadequately because they have serious grievances within their own ranks and sympathize with the demonstrators. On some occasions, however, the police have reacted brutally. [REDACTED]

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IRAQ: Government troops, supported by aircraft, yesterday attacked Kurdish armed forces about 100 miles north of Baghdad, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Kurds initially repulsed the troops, but the army is sending in reinforcements by air and may be about to launch a drive to force the local Kurdish population to evacuate the oil-rich area around Kirkuk. Kirkuk is located on the outer fringe of the area claimed by Iraq's Kurdish minority, who number about 2 million.

One of the main sticking points in the current negotiations aimed at resolving the long-standing dispute over Kurdish demands for autonomy has been the delimitation of the autonomous region. Both sides are agreed that the Kurdish region would remain a part of the Iraqi state. The Kurds demand, however, that Kirkuk be included in the autonomous region; the government, on the other hand, refuses even to consider this possibility. Under no circumstances could Baghdad permit a potentially subversive element to dominate this important oil-producing area.

If the clashes continue, they will doom the government's attempt to negotiate a settlement of the Kurdish autonomy issue before March 11, the date on which the current truce--in effect for the past four years--is to expire. Baghdad probably will go ahead and announce its plan for autonomy anyway, whether the leaders of the dominant Kurdish Democratic Party, headed by Mustafa Barzani, agree or not. Such a move would do little to end the long-standing Kurdish rebellion, however, and fighting probably would become intensified.

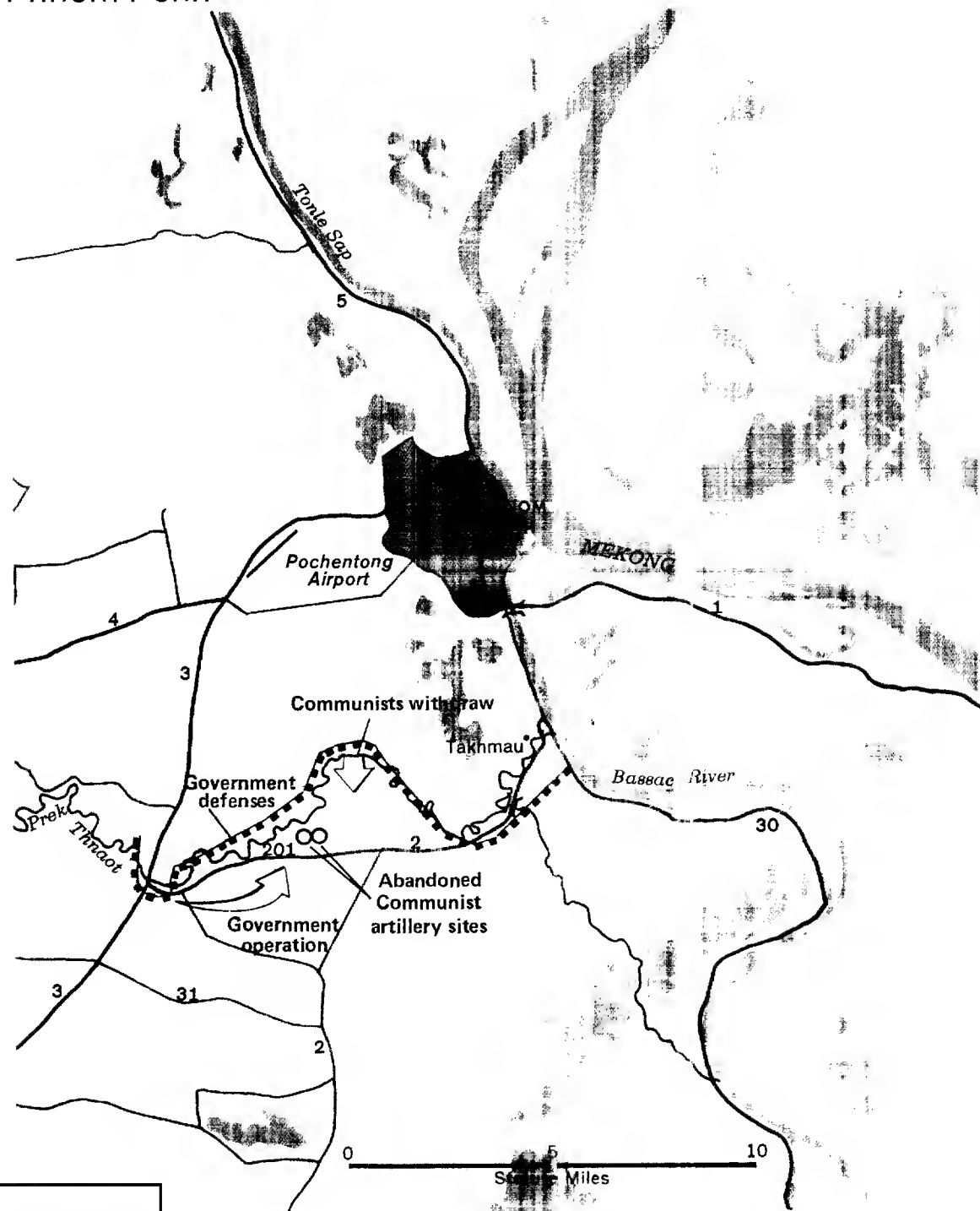
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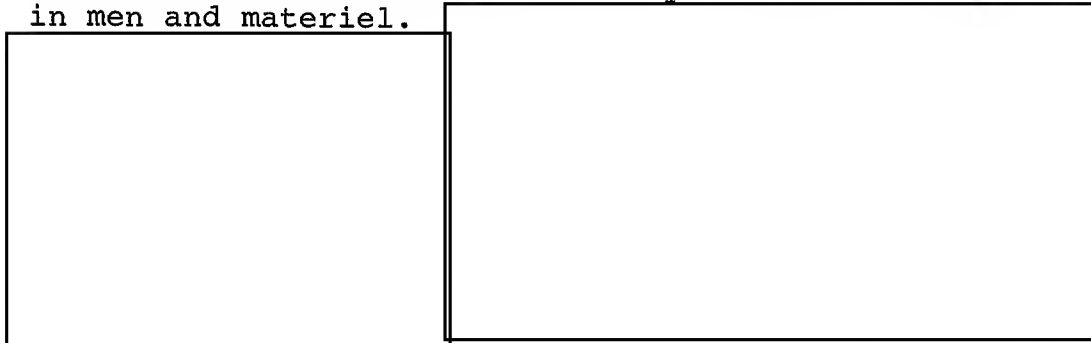
Phnom Penh



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CAMBODIA: Cambodian Army operations south of Phnom Penh have apparently forced the Khmer Communists to pull their artillery in this sector out of range of the capital. Advancing government troops yesterday discovered two abandoned artillery positions and over 400 expended 105-mm. howitzer casings near Route 201 some seven miles from the city. Communist units at the center of the southern defense line have withdrawn to the south bank of the Prek Thnaot River, leaving behind significant quantities of ammunition.

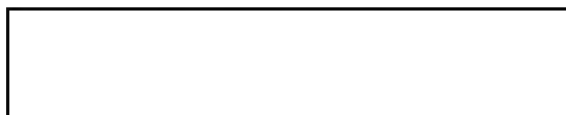
The government gains on the southern front follow successful government operations northwest of Phnom Penh which resulted in heavy Communist losses in men and materiel.



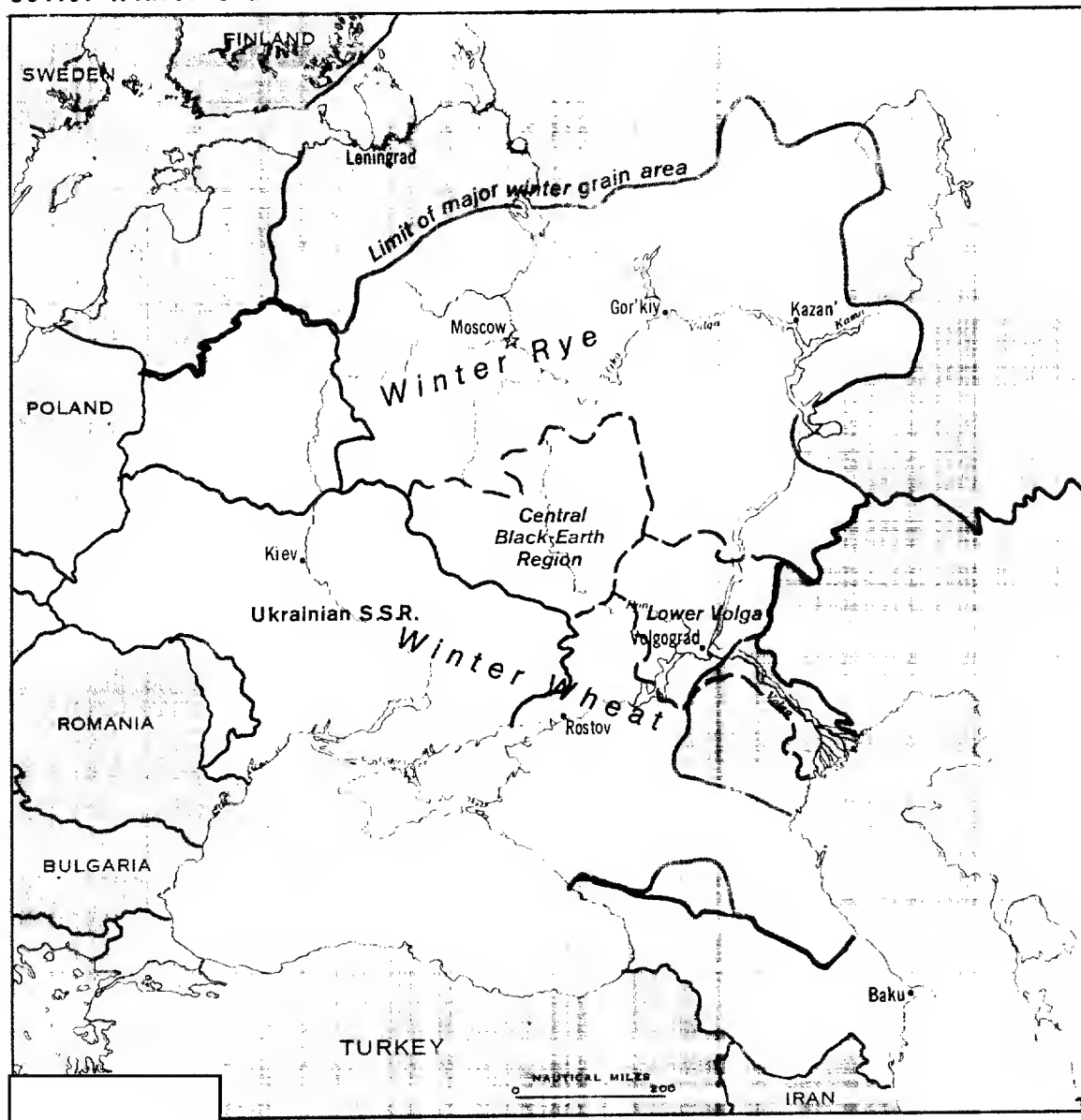
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Soviet Winter Grain



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USSR: A front-page article in Izvestia on Wednesday indicates no letup in the unusual weather that has left this year's Soviet winter grain crop particularly vulnerable to above-normal winterkill. It reported that key winter grain areas are threatened by melting snow, flooding, and ice crusts. Although claiming "no special grounds for alarm and concern," the article ordered farmers to drain flooded fields immediately and prepare for severe frosts that could kill crops deprived of protective snow cover.

A wet autumn delayed some sowing, and an early cold spell slowed the development and reduced the hardiness of the grain in most of the European USSR. An unusual thaw in late December, followed by a sudden cold spell in mid-January, damaged sowings in the northeastern Ukraine, the Central Black-Earth Region, and the Lower Volga. The snow cover needed to insulate the plants from killing cold was thin or absent over most of the area through January. Now, above-normal temperatures in February have completely melted the snow cover in key areas. Standing water and ice crusts could suffocate some seedlings, but more threatening is the warm weather, which reduces plant resistance to the extreme cold still likely to occur.

Although the winter grain area lost to winterkill could exceed the long-run average of 20 percent, a large planting last fall and the reseedling of damaged areas to spring grain could still produce a normal or above-normal 1974 crop. The reseedling is usually done with feed grains, so winterkill tends to reduce the breadgrain harvest. [REDACTED]

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EGYPT: An Egyptian official informed Ambassador Eilts yesterday that Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko will visit Cairo on March 1, just a day after Secretary Kissinger's stopover there.

The official also disclosed that French Foreign Minister Jobert will arrive in Cairo on March 6.



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JAPAN: US Marines on Okinawa are being severely criticized by the local press for carrying out live-firing exercises on February 20 while antibase demonstrators were in the training area. None of the demonstrators was injured, but a Japanese official has predicted to US Embassy contacts that the issue will be raised in the Diet. The government might feel compelled to request that such exercises be suspended until after this summer's Upper House elections.

The base issue was quiescent until a few weeks ago, when the Japan Communist Party began to make good mileage out of the alleged dangers involved in port calls by US nuclear-powered submarines. The US Embassy is speculating that, because of the increasingly tense political environment in Tokyo, the Tanaka government might be obliged to oppose any port call by a nuclear-powered submarine--even one caused by an emergency at sea or in response to some urgent operational requirement.

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JAPAN: Labor will probably succeed in forcing industry and government to grant massive wage boosts in the next few weeks, aggravating the soaring inflation that is Prime Minister Tanaka's most serious domestic problem.

A union-directed campaign of demonstrations, strikes, and slowdowns will move into full gear next week. The expected pay increases, likely to average 20-25 percent, will outstrip the advances in labor productivity predicted for this year.

Private industry will probably settle quickly with its unions. The government, however, may be more reluctant to yield to the wage and working-condition demands of the public sector unions. These unions may resort to widespread disruptions in the transportation and communications industries.

Tanaka, hoping to avoid a repetition of the prolonged rail slowdowns that sparked commuter rioting last year, may seek accommodations earlier than usual. This would conflict with the attempts of Finance Minister Fukuda to control inflation with fiscal and monetary restraints.

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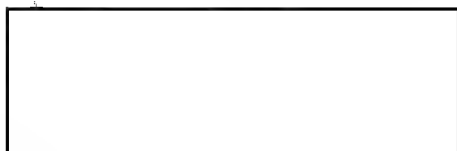
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